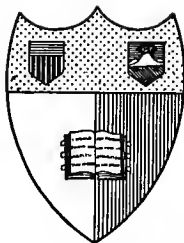


Phantoms of Life

by

Luther Dana Waterman



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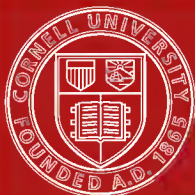
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PHANTOMS OF LIFE

BY

LUTHER DANA WATERMAN

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I.

I would unclasp a tendril of life's pain
By giving glimpses to the soul beguiled
Of that fair land whose boundaries lie far down
In the wild world that colors all our dreams,
Far-dwelling, fragrant, flowery, and bedewed,
Beyond the ken of day; but whither yet
The heart will yearn with instinct unappeased
As yearns the child for its dead mother's breast,
And with a faith that's stronger than all sense,
Than reason clearer, longer-lived than will;
Despite the frigid clay that wraps this life
And all the poisoned passions that betray,
The soul sends out frail gossamers of hope
To catch the radiance of that unknown clime
And thrill with the unheard music of its shores.
Oh ! if the autumn bud within its husk
Has felt a prescience of the summer come
And swelled impulsive with a fragrant hope,
Why, why may not the soul, by earth bedimmed,
In inmost centre of its consciousness
Glow with a transient gleam of happier lands
And melt with mellow music heard by hope ?

II.

As soars the summer lark high into heaven
It pours a-down to earth with all its soul
The melody it catches as it goes
Above the din of this discordant world ;
So one as striving up toward truth he goes,
With laboring soul that knows but that it moves
Onward and upward and godward for aye,
Should tell the new stars that his eye can see ;
Should pass the watchword of the sentinel
That ever sings upon the battlements
O'er looking man's existence "all is well" ;
Should with his song tell all who sleep below
That morn is near, and seen from his clear height,
Is known by sheen of its ethereal spear ;
And give the music and the morning song
Of his soul's heavenward aspiration pure
To sweetly all the dawn below attune.

III.

Oh! ever nearer, clearer to the soul
Are heard the harmonies divine of heaven,
And dimmer the infernal discords grow.
New starry truths are visible above;
Far more unmixed and purer is the song
Creation sings around the central throne;
And pure its echo from the furthest bound.
Sweet voice of answer from the outmost thing.
That living glows in space's outmost verge.
O'er all the discord of this striving world
Floats higher concord, subtle yet distinct,
Of which earth's murmur makes a faint sweet note.
There comes dim vision of the transformed world
When it and man are sunned with truth's full smile;
And o'er the conscious soul there gently breathes
The flowing ether that forever bears
All nature, on its bosom, toward its aim.

IV.

The poet makes a world out of the best
Of all the world he lives in ; peoples it
With the best ones of all the souls he loves,
Honors, or worships ; colors it with all
The gathered gleams of earth's dim beauty felt ;
And atmosphered with hope and sunned with love,
In wandering orbit dimly seen of life,
He courses the serene of heaven in faith ;
And listens ever far beyond his ear
To catch the harmonies within his soul.
Himself the sole possessor and the lord
Of golden realms wide-lying in his sight—
The land of poesy, that has not been,
Yet islanded from life but by a thought ;—
The glimpse of life to pure souls possible,
Where hearts that sorrow for the evil growths
That ever spring from the untilled soil of mind,
May enter musing in a robe of thought
Invisible, and hold commune with hope.

V.

Thus every soul an unknown kingdom has,
 With magic music heard but by itself;
 And lives thus castled in its phantom world
 Of fact and fancy blent and built by hope.
 It treads the pastures of its winding vale,
 'Neath the blue beauty of the boundless air,
 And all the scene is vocal with delight.
 The crowded air is swift with forest wings,
 And shapes of fragile beauty hover round;
 All things of beauty blend them in his soul;
 Fruits many-lobed and juicy paint the air,
 And songs that have a forest echo wild
 Sounded from leafy thickets joyous hold
 The pulsing air in musical suspense.
 Quick fancy sees the drapery of fair forms that move
 In the wild measures of a native dance,
 Revealing wanton witchery of shape
 To tempted thought but hiding from the eye:
 Out of its world rise dreamful ladders on
 Which holy thoughts reach heaven and descend.
 It has a realm unseen, but ever shaped
 Of its own wishes from the world around;
 And lives a liquid life, and shapes itself
 With self-made indentation to its shore.

VI.

The truth in its full sweetness measured out
Is poetry, that sets the labor of our lives
To music, until work becomes a song
With a rich lesson in it; and it gives
The truthful dreams, that break at midnight hour
The spirit's solitude, in which it holds
A mystical communion, converse high
With the more ethereal world that lies beyond
The common sight of man; and hears sweet airs
By nature breathed upon the chords of life.
Such poetry is the Sabbath of our thoughts;
It ever fills the soul o'erfull of such
Rich thoughts as come with spring in meadows wild.

VII.

As man shall ripen poetry shall grow,
And utter all his soul's high thoughts in song
Whose tones shall move an eager listening age
And into harmony their souls convert.
The poet brings the lofty down to earth;
And veiled in sweetness pure philosophy
Breaks to the common heart of humankind.
Philosophers are poets, and are led
By daring reason, that would searching find
The meaning of existence, up to love.
The poet, worthy of the dignity,
Through beauty rises to philosophy
So pure it knows an angel, though in mask,
By its sweet mission promptly recognized,
And lives a helper in its kind intents.

VIII.

Again shall poetry be prophecy
And higher truth new-winged with melody.
Will knowledge ever feeling paralyze?
Give it again the good and beautiful
Beneath the ever-changing forms of time;
Its theme the golden beam that passing through
The lingering chaos of this present earth
Lights into truth and hope the darkness left,
Revealing unto man his higher aims.
It must no longer hang a faded flower,
But be expression of man's truest hope;
The voice within his soul of truths to come;
The utterance of the souls who lead the world,
And cheering shout of victory's approach.

IX.

Thought that is winged for loftiness may catch
The ravelled end of being in itself
And trace it through the labyrinth of life
By its necessity—the law of life ;—
So from dull clay in fancy call up forms
Of heaven, and in all living beauty clothe ;
And see in this uncultured world a trace
Of primal loveliness to tint its thoughts.
So carve a rough and unhewn soul by love
To life's full statured majesty of mien.
The rarest glimpse of beauty is a hint
The heart may seize on, and so travel out
By subtlest cords of feeling till they reach
The beautiful of its own inmost wish ;
And souls are thirsting for the beautiful
As the earth does for summer-evening dews.

X.

Man skimming all that has been writ by man
Must catch it not as habit of the mind,
But keep its music echoing in his soul;
And sip from all things truth as bees from fields
Get only honey ; and so grow a heart
That dares to pierce the dust of centuries,
And veils of purpose woven by mankind,
To seek the truth even if his hopes should die.
The reach of earth toward heaven is told
By the mapped orbit of its highest soul.
He must go on in earnest pathway straight
Seeking for heaven, and he shall final find ;
For it forever does ensphere this world.
They only miss who hesitate to soar,
Whose feet to clay cling with a frantic fear.

XI.

Long after earth was made, the common eye
In purpose purified, could trace the truth
And beauty in it clear again to God,
Who lately made it, and so learn His law;
But now bright broken gleams alone are left
That show dim reason; so the soul must seek
(Now earth has passed its furthest orbit dark)
For truth and glory brightening on ahead.
The soul that loves the truth has that within
That makes it priceless: 't is so pure it needs
But little change to make it angel all:
It finds on every leaf the written word,
Divine when once we know the language well.

XII.

The narrow bounds of earth's intelligence
Beside the wideness of his dream-domain
Is half the lesson man learns here below.
How sad each new conviction makes the soul
That just has launched upon an unknown sea
With fairy-lands of fancy in his hope
And magic powers of manhood in his arms.
Ah! when the richest souls are wrecked, how poor
And paltry are the fragments strown on shore.
Yet there are days when to the hopeful soul
Awaiting for its dreams to verify
Naught seems impossible that it can name;
For action seems all language to outrun,
And words too slowly shape themselves for deeds.
Life larger seems and with more meaning full,
And death the dimming of the eye that opes
On dazzling vision of far brighter scenes.

XIII.

To him whose hope is lifted up in faith,
Who sends his aspiration up to heaven,
There comes the spark that shows the world unseen
Is kindred in its truths to all we know;
But spreads its living vastness far beyond
The meagre world he touches in this life;
While of the power that sways the universe,
He ponders on the shadow of the fringe
That trembles in creation's darkest void.
'T is well before the problems of this life
To stand with soul divested of the false,
And comprehend them infinite; and know
That great and small have origin alike,
Hid ever in the unfathomable past.

XIV.

Stand ever bravely with thy soul uplift
And passive only to the will of heaven.
So shalt thou catch the purposes of God
In silent fervor ere the bolt shall fall,
And hold communion with the universe
By truth's ethereal influence conjoined.
Fly all thy thoughts toward heaven, and reach
The electric pulses of the skies, but give
Them easy passage to the world beneath,
Lest they o'ercharge thy soul. So shalt thou be
A link in the completed chain of all,
At ease to walk in loving sweet suspense
Between its higher and its lower loves.

XV.

Man yet shall have more senses than these five,
And wider revelation of all things
Than sight or hearing. Now we call it faith,
Imagination, intuition, hope;
These are the embryo wings that form within
That yet shall bear him far beyond this earth,
New forms of life and other hopes reveal.
Around us throng the shadows of great truths,
And revelations hover o'er our path;
They wait for larger sense than man now has,
To rush upon his soul for evermore.
The age called golden was but earth lit up
Afar by dawn of glorious years to be!

XVI.

Man once was pure as infancy is pure,
And earth was beautiful as to a child—
Clear vision of its order visible.
But as he questioned what he saw, he lost
The open meaning that was all it had,
And sought it long and blindly science-wise
Until he reached his childhood-faith again ;
And seeing it, he called himself redeemed.
And every race kept sacredly the faith,
But in transmitting it so warped and changed
Until the truth was not with one but all,
And only could be found by joining them.
So only those whose souls by suffering
Grew sympathetic with all kinds of men
Could get from each a part and blend to truth.

XVII.

As the true soul that grows with natural growth,
Assimilating with a love of truth
Earth-lore, and growing stronger with its years,
Can wean itself from earth and feed its flame
From subtler lights than sunshine; and can lure
From outward, infinite diviner thoughts—
Than those which come through matter intricate—
So the spirit ripe in human wisdom finds
No truth it ever learned in life grow false,
But only lose itself in countless truths.
By what of god-like man has in his soul
He knows to that extent the absolute.
All life on earth is but the spirit-pulse
That lends to matter its significance,
And vitalizes chaos with its touch.

XVIII.

Philosophy and numbers and high poetry
Are not mere phantoms of a mortal soul,
Brief emanations of the life-lit clay:
They are the radii of the infinite,
And mark the limits of the human soul;
They measure well the power divine in man.
When dies the man from matter's grosser form,
And grows the soul too strong for chemistry,
It takes the purpose from its organed mold,
And all the life-pulse earthward ebbs again;
Then man shall lose no knowledge that he wins,
But only find it less by knowing more;
And know it better as he knows the more;
And find them parts of nature's spherul whole.

XIX.

When men first come from blank unconsciousness
And hunger for mere food, they minister
To subtler changes and to deeper laws
Than we can ever know; they grow as men,
And the keen wish, the hunger of the soul,
Obeys a voice as deep as their own lives
And wondrous as the first of human thought.
The atoms that now do the work of will
No more can be mere chemicals; they have
Impressed an impulse of affinity;
And after but with kindred atoms wed
To make a soul still greater possible.
Thus man in living matter so uplifts
To make conditions capable for growth
Of grander man than all the years have seen.

XX.

Some men see clearest truth by onward sight ;
Some backward looking through all nature's path.
This earth is matter's furthest outward growth,
And truest man the brain-cell of the earth.
Matter and soul—truth comes to him through both.
He is combined of all the laws of earth
And elements in highest form evolved ;
And intuition gets of nature's will
By inward impulse of the laws within
That serve to mark her purposes unchanged :
So man gets revelation from himself.
The soul is ever like a vortex vast
Directed godward, seeking truth for life ;
And with its many aspirations lures
The truth to gain its final harmony.

Thought, flashed on life's stream infinite, could see
Once chaos thrilled with equilibrium lost.
Matter for cycles grew more palpable ;
In ages liquid ; and then solid ; rock,
Then crystal, plant, and animal, to man.
Motion was always : motion life ; life change ;
And with variety the universe.
So matter once centrifugally fled
As organizing focal chaos wandering,
In orb eccentric : its aphelion reached
In conscious organisms high, it ever tends
Godward again through many subtle forms,
Passing adown the steps of wondrous life
And closing after it the gates of light,
So that no glory, nor the sound of tool
Awork on worlds behind, can ever reach
The ear of man in this world while he dwells.

XXII.

From the dark ages, first of human times,
When appetite was king and worshipped all,
Men rose by slow degrees and many falls,
In blindness laboring, mad and ravenous,
To see a higher purpose in their lives ;—
But fitful, dim, and doubtfully at times ;—
To seek for order and the way to work ;
To ask for rights and power to keep their gains :
So pared the surface from this cruder life,
And looked beneath to find the deeper law ;
And wondrous found it, full of higher laws
That rule the soul and so rule all things else :—
Each man epitome of all man learns,
And type of the completed orb of things.

XXIII.

Each soul has its high mission it must do,
Or be a clog upon the cumbered aim
Of those who strive with far prophetic eye
To work the time's great purposes.
The earth is brimmed with evils, and each one
Calls for stout hearts to wear it beat by beat
Of hopeful thought till it gives way at last.
Oh ! that some hand would strike earth's blistered rocks
And bring such gush of sweet reviving joy !
We teach machinery to work like hands,
And thus gain time to further move the world
Up toward the day when work shall be no more ;
When every wind shall blow our words to friends ;
To waves be all interpreted and talk ;
The light of day shall carry thoughts of love ;
The clouds be full of moral meanings fine ;
And earth be but the base on which for aye
The monumental man shall live and smile.
The strong-armed swimmer, his eye sunned with hope,
Can win rich waifs and glorious isles of calm.

XXIV.

Man has within his soul the focal laws
That bind this earth into a perfect whole.
The kindred links of nature to the soul,
Which are as elements, conditions, cause;
And as they in the future upward reach
Must perfect grow in evolution full,
Till matter shall with spirit wholly blend.
The universe its cycle must complete,
In Time's vast vortex evermore involved.
New constellations ever glow above;
Horizons never charted far appear;
And man must ever newer reckoning take,
And learn new modes of guidance or give o'er
To drift in aimless darkness evermore.

XXV.

Man must have countless ways to find the truth.
Enlarge thy thought of revelation's mode.
For every truth that lights upon thy soul
Thy latest revelation is on earth.
Keep thou thy vision from all falsehood free;
Thy spirit lifted above all things base,
That hovering truths may love to light on thee
And linger welcomed till their work is done.
Thy aspiration inspiration lures;
And ever will the soul, awatch and pure,
Observe the earliest radiance of the dawn
And know the coming day ere earth awakes.

XXVI.

The rays of truth that come to reason's eye
From the far infinite, their only source,
Must ever seem to reason parallel,
Converging never toward a primal start.
Who traces backward one may travel on
Forever and no contradiction find
Except he lose his path. All rays at last
Lead back to truth and touch its wondrous sphere;
But only he whose soul is large enough
To trace them all until they end in truth
And so reveal its bounds, can see the tend
That leads the reason toward the darkened core
Eternal of the living final truth.

XXVII.

Look thou abroad and swear a love for all
Thou seest, and all thou canst not see, and peace
Shall canopy thy soul, as full of hopes
As heaven of stars o'erbends the summer night.
Who so can comprehend the fulness all
Of thought that's hid in that word love, has read
Life's riddle well and has the key of joy.
Love is beyond and justice does include;
In fullest wisdom only is it found.
Who hates a thing in all the universe
Breeds in his soul a life-long discontent.
To hate is but to suffer; and to loathe
A single sweet existence is to mar.
False love is self by passion echoed back.
True love goes trembling from the soul for aye,
Like music from the gates of paradise
In vibratory sweetness unreturned.
Twice blest the soul that's atmospher'd in love
And has no ritual for it. Sweet the joy
That ripples o'er the common beach of life.

XXVIII.

Some spirits spurn the sad inheritance
Of flesh, and long for immortality ;
They shun the Eden-lands that earth has given
For man to dwell in with scant happiness,
And scale on daring wings the walls of heaven ;
They thwart the sweet persuasion of the tongue,
The lure of graceful form, the charm that hangs
On easy action, and the pleasant bribe
Of generous features ; and they ever go
Through all their days in hopes unwed,
In life misunderstood ; and sail the seas
Of hope in disappointment—pirate flags
High at their masts, and death-heads at their prow.

XXIX.

Some are poor morning lives whose break
Gave many sunrise promises, and had
A fitful beauty of their own, but lost
Themselves in gray imperfectness of age.
Some are forever twilight, and give o'er
Their days to sadness, silence, solitude;
They hear the drip of time's suspended oar
Useless against the tide; they hark in vain
To whisperings from the beyond of life;
Hear plaintive cries reproachful, making joy
A new repentance, and all life
A sin perpetual, by their timid doubts.
'T is hard to build a life so toward the sky
That every part is in the sunshine steeped.

XXX.

Some lives are hungry, bloodless, pale, and thin,
And shun the healthy air of common sports;
They strain at mirth, go backward toward joy,
See but to scorn, and think of but to sneer.
Like voiceless owls, pale perched aloft in gloom,
That flap exultant wings when from afar
They see the taper burning through the night
That tells where some faint hope yet flickers low.
Faint phantom things that shudder at the moon
Fear not the sunlight more than they a laugh.
The essence of a thousand such condensed
Contains not one warm, full-pulsed, ruddy joy
To tune the march of life to thankfulness.

XXXI.

Some lives are sunshine from the break of thought :
Their days are one glad noonday light ; their hopes
From shadows free ; care's vapors all dispersed ;
They warm the earth around them to such glow
No mists of sadness may obscure their close ;
And soften down into a quiet age
Crowned with a starry loveliness of calm.
Some, like a funeral torch, with joy shut out,
Slow burn themselves away in curtained gloom,
Or soon flare out in desolate rainy streets.
Some early enter into solitude,
And take no wish to trace the way by back.
Some taste of life as of a doubtful drug,
And ever have at hand an antidote.

XXXII.

He who forsakes not fevered forms of life,
That fill with hopes they cannot gratify,
Till they become the tyrants of his joys
And leave life void because it has no aim
Is worth the stretching of the hand to pluck—
At last must lift life's merry mask to find
A crumbling statue turning into clay.
Such never weave from threads of joy a web
To catch the flying wings of happiness.
Such lives are ever parallel with truth,
And shadowed by her influence they go on,
And glow with radiance from her golden goal,
Till the end comes and finds them landed not
Within the wished-for portals of her bliss.

XXXIII.

This earth is real and this life is true ;
And worth a brood of distant suns to him
Who cannot weigh one breath of this he has
With countless ages of some other one.
Its summer lost, no gold can gild this life.
So strive to pass thy days for all their worth,
And sing thy song with unobstructed throat,
And pause in silence more melodious still.
The soul that feeds itself on phantom hopes
And finds no charm in russet cheeks of health,
The currents of its life all inward turned,
Deludes itself forever with base forms
By having not calm purposes of faith
That fearless walk the waters of this earth
Despite the surge that frets their steadfast feet.

XXXIV

This earth's society might better be ;
Yet greater liberty of love and hate
Would end in anarchy and loss of all.
Earth is not ready for the law of love ;
Its aim must justice be until it wins.
But love and justice ultimate are one ;
And he alone can love whom wisdom shows
That wrong to aught is ever wrong to self.
The grandest justice is with pity one ;
No hand should smite until 't is wet with tears.
Who seeks the truth seeks God, for He is truth.
Who aims at good and loves his fellow-men
Is by the fact ambassador of Heaven.

XXXV

Life has more meaning in it than all griefs
And loves and hates and happiness can count.
'T is not in nature, either part or all,
To comprehend itself to destiny.
There is a realm outlying consciousness,
Not claimed by title writ by human ken.
This life an earthside and a heavenside has:
No truth will come from either if alone.
Man should walk wakeful through the glaring day,
With ear attentive to the mystic worlds
That lie beyond in infinite expanse,
And color life as either most prevails.

XXXVI.

Matter and spirit are but branches both
That trace themselves to God, than either more.
When man has in assimilation grown,
He shall know more than now by being more.
Till when let men look forward hopefully ;
And as the music of creation's aim,—
The hymn of life that rose and falls with time,—
Swells louder to their souls, so yield them up
That all their purposes and thoughts and deeds
Arrange themselves with daily growth of power
To harmony with all the universe ;
Till soul and body be one conscious cord
Responsive to the purposes that made.

XXXVII.

All knowledge the relation is the parts
Each other bear, and toward the whole sustain.
Man's reason its own limits can discern,
And conscious be in its extremest verge;
He cannot cease until he knows himself;
And self will strive until 't is merged in all.
When to their utmost reach he knows his thoughts,
His aspiration will be satisfied,
And his whole prayer will final answer gain;
Then echo from without of voice that forms
Will swell with sympathy his song on earth;
And knowledge lose itself in boundless faith.

XXXVIII.

We see the earth descend in beauty's form,
And know it but in some material sense
From the unknown looming by the path of law.
Hope leans us ever toward knowing more ;
So shuns the loss of living consciousness.
The lesson is far short of final truth
Within man's reach in this his earthly life,
That teaches him to cast this life as naught
To find the happiness so missed beyond.
There is no element of all this earth,
Atom or crystal, worm or man, can fail
Of its allotted labor and not jar
The ordered purpose of the universe
Out of its groove and chaos bring again.

XXXIX.

The arts are gone that conquered nature first :
When we have bowed us to her laws at last,
And implements that help lie cast away,
As broken shells where once young eagles rose,
Then art shall minister to man's higher needs,
And bring earth's beauty out so plain the blind
May see a glimpse of her first loveliness.
Things that are writ are worthless unless made
Into the blood and brain of daily life :
The good are grown of earth's great pulse a part ;
So leave their impress on the deeds of men.

XL.

Take life as it is given, and not repine
That nature seems with stinted hand to give.
The gift that breedeth love is like a mine,
Richer the more you search it. Joy to live;
And with a cheerful soul sing on the flowers
That earth outspreads in life's sweet morning hours.
The soul should be a fountain where all thoughts
When bathed should ever beautiful come forth.
To rightly think of nature is to pray.
Who lives for life existence well rewards.
Who has truth's living spark within his soul
Can fearless thread the darkness of this world,
And by its radiance pass the gates of death;
And find it brighten as life less obscures,
To burn in beauty in the realms beyond.

XLI.

Life has no aim above the growth of soul.
This life is not in vain that teaches well
The value of the soul beside all else.
For as an atom moves the very globe
When falling toward it, so one soul is of
Proportioned value in the all of things.
Soul-culture is the purpose of this life;
The harvest is all lost that ripens it not;
And science with a thousand shafts of light
The place and poise of man in nature shows
So correspondent with the universe,
In pole with pole, the currents all divine
Can pass unhindered through his willing soul.
And there are days when the soul's atmosphere
Is grown so clear the truth is visible.

XLII.

Wouldst thou be angel-worker of the truth,
To sweetness and sublimity give voice ;
And by the atmosphere and tone of love,
Whose touch gives beauty to the rudest things,
Transfigure life to justice and to joy.
So fill thy season men shall say thou wert
A spirit in whose mould there was the cast
Of nations ; and within thy soul there dwelt
The loftiness of purpose that looks o'er
The stormy passions of the race and sees
The steadfast nature that is far beyond ;
A pioneer of hope in spirit pure
Of prophecy, who stopped in wilds and turned
The sod of happier realms that yet shall be.

To him that labors in the cause of truth
And sees its orb grow brighter as he works,
There is no failure, save that he may have
His hopes too large for all his power and time.
Let him who knows his aims are truly good
Exult, for triumph on him ever waits,
And every passing moment crowns his life
With conscious victory that greater grows.
The agitation that seems fiercely bent
The tree of social culture to uproot
Has those who represent it blind as moles,
Each burrowing for himself in search of wants.
The moral of existence and the star
Is well to know what life is and is not.
'T is what we know, not what we hope, that makes
Us better in our lives. Far better know
That we know not, than think we know and miss.

God works in kindness ; from earth's Babel sound
The ear that is well open for the truth
Hears oft the sweetest melody of mirth :
For when the work divine goes on, the world
Is wild with music ; and the words that tell
Unsyllabled to men are pleasantness.
Earth passes down the steps of light so bright
Its radiance makes the unknown beautiful.
In the true church a harmless laugh is praise ;
Joy, prayer ; and dancing, worship ; more than psalms
Is music ; and whole-hearted happiness,
Religion, healthy, sane, o'er whose expanse
Sweet purposes career. The fuller is the soul
Of this earth-life, the richer 't is in love.

Men love the truth, but all know not its garb.
They seek the true and worship what they find.
They Justice love but do not know her face,
And scowl at her inflexibility.
'T is by a truth and beauty all distort,
Set in a trap with grim intent of wrong,
That evil tempts ; for error ne'er allured.
All things exist by virtue of their good.
What evil seems in gross has good within.
Seek out, nor for its evil pass it by:
So shall you get an antidote for pain
From stifling weeds that stupefy the air.

To-day is but as others practical :
The present ever does the real seem.
Religion widens as all else to souls.
Throughout all time the uttered words of God
Have been interpreted by needs of men
And by the voice of nature ; as in days
When every isle, hill, dale, dell, wood,
And every leaf-built nook had its air stirred
By flitting robes of more than human form,
Fair living shapes of beauty and of good.
They of old days whose souls were lift
Above desires that fever foolish flesh,
Saw earth and heaven as near each other drawn
As he will see who soars long ages hence.
Earth alters not save in suggestive forms ;
And it is all it has been to the soul ;
All it will be—it was not made for heaven.

XLVII.

Why should man search amid the darker days
Of dreary struggles for a meagre life,
When all the faculties of human souls
Were straining for existence and for light,
To learn the path to freedom and to peace—
The terms on which life best may yield to death?
Why listen to the lisplings of his babyhood?
Not backward into darkness look for truth,
But forward, with transfigured spirit, catch
The earliest radiance of the coming dawn—
The fuller day of final fadeless truth.

The orbit of the world is its great men.
'T is not complete till all great men are past.
The poet's perfect world has all within
In larger song that gives full harmony
To words the human heart can gladly sing;
Not some bewildered echo of the truth.
When all time's cycle is at last complete,
The universe like one great instrument,
Made perfect and attuned by one high hand,
To harmony shall vibrate undisturbed;
And man shall know himself a part of it,
And see at last how his discordant jar
Is part of its great concord unperceived.

XLIX.

One man of old stands like a mountain top
Above the time, and all the striving world
Seems ever since to fret around his feet ;
And hardly see his face above the clouds
Forever sunned in the serene of heaven :
Because our world lay prone beneath his love,
And saw him highest from our plane of self,
And felt his loving faith best touched our eyes
And opened them to an all-boundless love.
When comes a day that he shall be outgrown,
The truth he taught the coming fruitage dwarf ;
When he no more redeems but hinders man,
Man will have had far higher growth of soul,
And felt a newer springtime in his thought.

Then shape not newer temples for thy thought
From broken sculptures gathered from the past :
You may not out of ruins rear a shrine
That will not rather more of ruin be.
The restless soul need gaze not up for heaven ;
It is the light through which all things are seen,
The atmosphere in which they all exist.
The only avenue to bliss we have
Is by the calmer byways of our lives,
In service of our duties travelled well
With steady foot of kindly household faith.
The eagle could not poise his wings on air
Without an eye on earth to steady them.

Forbear all martyrdom of man's beliefs;
It matters not to earth what man believes
About the next existence while in this,
So the brave soul in honesty believes.
We cannot thwart the ordered course of earth
By knowing more or less of what it is;
Nor can by alchemy anticipate,
Of this outflowering world from chaos up,
The final end,—of wither or of fruit.
So let Truth's workmen unannoyed go on:
Time swiftly brings us the conclusion clear.
But in the petty balances of life,
Whereby we earn and live and fight and wed,
It much concerns us what our fellows think,
That help or hinder may our small success.

Conformity is often cowardice.
Let man stand up and face his fellow-man.
Away with dead majestic forms of forms ;
Speak now the truth and the soul's verdict give.
In the wise future men shall speak of this
As one among the ages wandered off.
But few from follies ever stand aloof.
Let men who look grow wiser as they live.
Not what a man believes, but what he does,
Concerns all other men. For our beliefs
Do not affect the life, or world to come.
No creed can substitute our duties here.
The souls of men cannot be swept at once
Of what the thousand years have died to teach.
Who sees the whence and whither of this world
Is in the womb and sepulchre of things,
Yet would be oracle, aye hides behind
The fanes ; and speaks as if the statued gods
Had moved their marbled lips in silence vain
Till he had their interpreter become.

LIII.

Against himself not nature man can sin ;
 Forever he does that which it intends.
 When man shall fail to fill his highest life,
 His aspirations for this world are dwarfed,
 And life's rich fruit drops off ere it matures.
 Though man should mar the manhood in his soul
 The final justice never feels the jar,
 More than tossed pebble of a school-boy's sport
 Can shake the universe's equipoise.
 All things as they transmute themselves to truth
 Lose all of sin's unlikeness that they have.
 The eternal, infinite, and absolute
 Man knows by so much as he has within
 Of Godlike : thus he measure may
 How much of infinite his spirit has ;
 How near eternal is his consciousness.

Philosophy, religion, poetry
Blend into unity as grows the soul.
The creeds are fossil: true religion is
The just conception of the things that are.
That church whose best are bigots, yet are true
To the accepted creed, is false. Give not
The dead and dry bones of old school-boy tasks
To the young tooth of hungry liberty;
Nor put the dried blood of old, outlived thought
Into the veins of a new vigorous race
To breed a pestilence. The world has saved
These relics for the humanness within.
There is an idea given a slothful slave
Will of him after make a noble race.
Let history tell the doer's deeds and life
Not capers of the puppets of the age.

The vision peaks that tower up out of life
See truths are echoes of a voice within ;
And facts as true as truth, the deeds of God ;
And books that tell them are his records writ.
God never did a thing in living works
To contradict it in a written word.
The day is near when worship shall be thought,
And every life shall be a joyful hymn.
A fountain of full hope unstruck by men
Deep in the human soul forever lies.
One moment of pure joy repays a life
And makes it better to have lived on earth.
We mount the summit of no year but gives
Some touch of brightness breaking far beyond.
Thrice happy is the heart that can so press
From hours of life their joy, earth's richest art.
Resolve to conquer what is wrong within
And a religion has in thee begun.

Seek thou the law no longer through old lives;
Reject their lisplings of imperfect truth.
In knowledge, go to nature for thy faith:
So canst thou know the real, living word.
Ever the truth, despite its angel eye,
Is known and worshipped only by the true.
Day after day reveals anew the world;
Year after year recruits the human heart;
And yet we tread the steady round of life,
And play with toys our fathers threw away,
And yield to lures that fooled men long ago.
Still in our feelings worship as divine
The beings by the agéd counted myths,
Or known as thread-bare fictions wrought with fact.
Now man mature must brush the fancy-webs
Of infancy away, and grasp the true.

LVII.

Each day shows newer earth than yesterday,
 And every moon reveals another night.
 Another spring succeeds the one that waned.
 All things that speed them in the groove of change
 Develop into boundless difference.
 We die from earth when those who knew us die.
 This form may be eternal, yet not known
 When separate from present attributes,
 In purer life transfigured and illumed
 By radiance hindered by no earthly air.
 What matters it ; we shall not cast our forms
 Till they obstruct the greater growth of soul,
 And love's attraction, and become a load
 We gladly lighten from our souls for aye.

Each hour is capable of joy ; each step
Leads our lives forward to some bliss ; each thought
Has in it pleasure hidden ; every pulse
Is one more rapture counted up to life.
Duties well done but reconcile this life's
Opposing features into happiness ;
And every silent deed of love will swell
Through years to ocean tides of benefit ;
And that which guides us surest here below
Best fits us for a future. Throw not down
The golden present for a future pearl.
Go thou through earth but with an eye on heaven ;
And keep the vesture of thy spirit pure
By thought lift up to beauty ; and thy heart
Be sweet with kind remembrance treasured up.

This earth is to each creature as it sees,
And ever keeps apace with its own hopes :
To the worm, a hiding-place from accidents ;
To the eagle, fields where it may swoop for prey ;
To man, a foot-path and a soil to dig,
A place to play his petty passions in,
And seeking life's small aims forever miss—
But work, unknowing, nature's purposes ;
And to the angel-soul, or angel-like,
A boundless field for pity and for thanks,
For charity, and unrewarded faith
In manhood more than any single man.
Earth's bane or blessing is in thy resolve.
Fill well the orbit of thy being up
On earth while here, and leave the glow to God.

LX.

All things are perfect to their perfect end ;
From perfect cause imperfect cannot come.
Whatever has not harmony is false.
There is a truth will harmonize all things :
It ever tends to show the sweet accord
That joins all things together in their aims.
The false is always but a part of truth.
Man's earthly eye can only partly see,
And discord sees ; but to his spirit-eye
Some discords blend to concord ; and so faith
Sweeps on from part to whole and sees
The glorious aim that unisons all things.

Feel thou the self-hood of the human race,
The oneness of the conscious creature man;
So linked by laws to final unity,
By aims, by source, by hopes, by nature all,
That all men are in conscious fate involved.
Build thou thy faith on science, which is based
On truth, and which shall yet o'erarch all things;
For it retraces, through all subtle change,
The thought by which the universe was made.
How ever insignificant seem men
Beside the truths they poorly represent,
Each burrowing for himself in search of wants,
While truth must wait: meanwhile the hopes and hear
Of men enlist, and grander contest grows.

LXII.

There is forever in the immortal soul
 A wild unrest, a hope unsatisfied,
 That throws one after one life's toys away,
 And clings to nothing save it keeps apace;
 Growing and reaching after something more.
 The love that satisfies and stills must be
 Most keen in sweet affinities of soul,
 Or rich in powers by blessed union given;
 Or duty drag it from its frantic hopes
 To labor in the steady ways of life.
 How weary one poor wish yet unfulfilled
 Can make the heart! Yet man has in his soul,
 Beyond all thought, an instinct makes him live;
 And living love; and loving deify.

LXIII.

Life is a lesson in the art of love,
That makes our wayward lives religious ; turns
The deluged heart to a sweet ministry.
It is the faith that makes life's prayer complete.
When pure it brings from out the chords of life
Their fullest music sweetly struck to joy.
It flashes on the sombre links of life
And gives it shape and glow of happiness ;
Its incense given to souls debased in self,
The dregs but leaves, the perfume goes to heaven.
It finds its own in other's happiness ;
And if 't is true must have such qualities
It will for life knit closer day by day
The hearts that have its sweet affinity.
There are in every good, well-purposed life
Hours when the passions are all kissed to sleep
By the fulfilment of its happiest hopes :
Then man is angel if but for those hours.

We need no old romance to teach us love
Or pain and penance full as life may know.
Is not the earth as green and sunshine bright,
And winter cold, as in the fabled past?
Are not our nerves as tense and sensitive?
We cannot better bear the cruel knife
That cuts life's clinging hope, than they
Who lived their rough and hardy lives of old ;
Who grasped as right whatever they could reach,
And got their title clear by holding fast.
All nature bids us love and offers joy.
None knows a life who feels not what it feels ;
No one is master of a soul whose kiss
Turns not its deepest sorrow into joy ;
None may a soul unless he loves it guide.
The greatest souls are always only great
To those who, loving, worship as they learn.

Ah! love is oft a phantom island far,
Nor ever rightly known from fairy clouds
Till our hearts wreck upon the reefs of doubt.
Though from the rocks hope strikes a crystal stream
It mostly runs through evil-tainted sands,
Defiled by mixture with the things of fear.
But if 't is love to have a living joy
Set in the spirit by each nameless grace;
If it be love out of the darkest depths
Of life grown desolate for want of hope
To feel a newer life come eager forth,
Crowned with immortal beauty into joy,
At whose quick touch this earth's discordant parts
Are gathered into wondrous harmony;
And if the spirit knows its counterpart
By recognition of mysterious sense,
Then all life's aspiration touches love
That is as nectar sipped with luscious lips
From flowers perpetual found in paradise.

LXVI.

Man often gropes through life his awkward way
Yet touches not the sympathetic chords
That make life music; solitude is his;
His hope is like a mountain lit far off,
A dark sea unexplored between.
All things seem ever selfish in their glee
And whisper him without their pale of joys.
So foiled all life grows passion-tossed and sad,
And what should nourish does but sicken it.
All fireside-lights peer blankly at his step,
And have no look of welcome for his eye,
Until his heart becomes a stony thing
Like statued apathy around whose base
The pulse of life with all its joys and griefs
Forever murmurs with its fretting waves,
But sees no answering consciousness
Stir in the staring stillness of its face.

LXVII.

Though there are many passions to the heart
 Ere all the compass of its love be lost ;
 Yet one is purest, crowning crown of all,
 By its twin heart made possible to each ;
 Where every impulse of the soul is met
 By budding wishes of its fellow-heart.
 And those whom nature weds with subtlest tie
 Show themselves mated from the first survey.
 To such concordant souls the world is Spring.
 None master may a soul he does not love.
 We lose ourselves with gravitation glad
 Forever in the souls we truly love.
 Divinest instinct of the soul is love.
 If the tense chord of life sweet music has
 When passion struck, its purest sound is love,
 That comes as naturally from opening hearts
 As perfume out of morning flowers new-blown.

LXVIII.

One should go ever with thee heart to heart,
Soul leaned to soul, through all this weary life
Of labor, surfeit, suffering, and surprise;
And where thou goest forever unto thee
The way shall sacred seem when memory
Can re-illumine it for that sake, and it
Shall be a sacred thought within thy soul;
A yearning in the yearning of thy heart;
The full completion of thy pictured hope;
The image in thy life of all things fair;
The inmost thought that will not quit with death.
The past is memory's, the future hope's;
We stand forever on the point between.
Around us from the dim do spirits rise.
Would that they could their lips in full unlock,
Revisit all the souls they loved on earth
With looks that should be revelation clear,
And love that ever should be part of life.

Love is the very crown of woman's life ;
Win that completely and her all is thine.
Her happy soul is overfull of mirth ;
It hears for aye the Sabbath sound of bells
On the religious air ; the golden waifs
That the rich wreck of day strews on the shore
Of night encircle, aye and splendor it.
If thou shouldst bind her with unworthy love
That leads but into the waste marsh of lust,
And never to the fertile fields of home,
She goes henceforth with desecrated soul,
Though turned from thee forever in disgust.
The gift of freedom is then robbery ;
And farewell but a buffet to the heart,
That goes henceforth all disinherited
Of hope, and joyless evermore in life
Of all that is not merely hollow glee
That holds its revel in a vacant heart.

Are men, reluctant, purposely so made
To find contentment only in the joy
That waits on heart-fulfilment, and the full
Completion in the complement of wife?
No other name will gather round the heart,
In gentle troop, sweet thoughts like that of wife;
None call from overpast such memories;
None paint the future with such glowing hopes.
Around her linger thoughts of bridal hours
Delicious, pure, and dreamy, frail with bliss.
Ah! how we tangle up our wilful lives
By wandering wildly in the dark away
From home and simpler hopes that after all
Are sweetest recompenses of our lives!
Such truest love in life will make us aye
Believe in immortality: who loves,
So loved, on earth may never after doubt:
Such love sweet nature's glance that opes the soul
To let a world of joy in evermore.

How brightly ever in the firmament
Of every heart stands out the star of home !
To homeless be, forever is in pain
To hear eternal harmony with eyes
Fixed toward the ever-open gates of far-off joy.
Ah ! when the soul has of existence grown
So weary that no charm in friendship lies,
And doubt looms up a phantom form instead ;
However self-reliant, then the heart
Feels need of sweeter power to guide its steps.
All else is wish that falters short of hope.
Through all the wonderings of its after-life
The heart yearns ever for that sweetest spot,
The mountain-top seen fairest from afar.
In suffering, solitude it teaches us,
By sweetly sad remembrance, that this life
Is empty ever till the heart is filled.

He who would make his life a precious thing
Must nurse a kindly purpose in his soul,
And with a sunny patience follow it.
This balanced life so trembles full of fear
We may not pay a motive for a kiss.
Life has its language and its fitting time
For love, life's master, to look laughing on.
So seek in confidence and you shall find
A joy so made that it will fit but you;
A home where like love's king you may put off
The cares of daily life, and whisper tales
Of olden dreams to ears that hear with joy.
The hero-hearts of life too often break
Without the sweet reward of victory.
Go hear the sweet songs of love's quiet homes,
For life not colored full of joy and grief
Can give its own nor others fullest tone.

True happiness on earth is only found
In the fulfilment of life's duties well.
All we can know of men is what they do :
Their aims are all their own. We only know
An angel by its deeds ; for shining wings
And brows with glory touched are promises
That make us question well of him who bears.
Warm broods the soul over its nest of love.
Nature seems on the threshold of all joy
When such well-mated souls together meet
To wander all the wilderness of life
In sweet companionship of heart to heart.
When true 't is the chance poem of an age.
Thank Heaven they grow no rarer with the years ,
But every following cycle counts them more.
The loftiest souls are to their lips in heaven,
But hardly dare to tell it to themselves.
What is the wage of life but labor's heart,
For aye serene, its own unspent reward.

Once many dusky faces, awkward forms,
And rudely featured, stood together brave,
And solved the question of their destiny :
Coarse faces looking as if sculpt from clay
Into man's image, but as lacking yet
The sculptor's touch to finish them to men :
Pure Freedom's statutes cut from living stone
And fashioned into manhood by her hand.
They held the future in their own right hands.
Who fears not death is lord of all who fear.
Then the vile habit of the human race
That learned to live by using others' toil
Reluctant yielded all unfit to stand ;
And men paid tribute in their best heart's blood
To the mean weakness of their ancestors,
And paid in war, the wages of a race.

That soul is poor that takes no note of wrongs
To others given till it is harmed itself.
Out of insensibility are tyrants made.
The soul that 's ever stirred by kind intent
For its spoiled wayward fellows has alone
An ever-during beauty in its life.
Who leads a land should calm and steadfast be,
Bonfire nor taper, but a tower of light.
Some lives are made so fine as to be frail ;
Some souls seem, sea-like, grander in their storms ;
But he who, strong in his humanity,
And urged by truth, stands firm against the world
When wrong, is almost godlike ; and so wins
A sense of power, and stands as near to God
As aught may do that is not all divine.

A land shall live if to its poorest just ;
Nor preaches peace with dagger for its text ;
Nor leads to war a blinded herd of men
Who lag forever in the way of truth ;
Nor can it guide the strife to come that has
Its ear too quick to catch the clink of gold,
Nor hands that perish at the touch of toil,
Nor voice that clank of fetters may o'erwhelm.
He knows the least, of men that know at all,
Who thinks he knows the secret of the world
And understands its deep perplexities.
Yet men are wiser than earth's cycled years
And in their little lives have weighed the world
And found it wanting ; and have judged it so.
Men quickly leap upon a deed that 's done
And turn it to their profits ; but the world
Swings grandly on its way and fate fulfills.

The shadow of old bondage glooms the earth,
And man is ever falsest to himself ;
And yields his freedom to the ancient forms
That own not man's equality of soul,
Construing accident into a law,
And knowing majesty but by its robes.
Not in subjection of his will can man
Get his full stature in the realm of truth ;
But by his bravest self-assertion calm ;
Though seemingly he thwarts the will divine.
He is most like his source when most himself,
And freest from all else that binds his will,
Except the limits that confine all things.

LXXVIII.

At last all bondage of the soul must break,
Unable or to bind or bear the strain;
Earth ever bears us toward this grand result.
Freedom's unfailing fountain deeper lies
Within the soul than hand of man can reach.
Each day is bondage nearer to its end;
Unbound the universe lives, gladdens, glows:
Full heaven and earth of governed liberty—
Not frenzied freedom, madly unrestrained.
The world that breeds unselfishness in one
Is somewhere worthy in its many lives.
All feudal forms and aristocracies
Are selfishness concrete—the barren blooms
Of once rich gardens into commons lapsed.
Democracy the germ, uncultured yet,
Of man's inherent generosity,
And wiser wisdom than the past has seen.
And truth well sung to fullest scope shall be
The epic of man's freedom, whose full sun
Shall glowing rise on old benighted realms.

LXXIX.

Earth was not made for nations but for man.
Wars are the nests where lands their tyrants hatch.
When every breast is liberty's pure shrine,
Then will the willing earth be truly free;
A hope in whose far light the future walks.
The test of men and nations is their aims.
But one man in a thousand knows the face
Of freedom, which is faith in fellow-men.
Yet man is ever for true freedom ripe
Till it has grown a custom of the mind.
It is the summit of advancing truth
That crowns with sweetness travail of the past;
The harvest labored in old fields of thought.
Full thanks to Heaven that with each setting sun
All tyranny is nearer to its end.

When woman has her rights, as well as man,
The senseless boundaries that now limit her
In love and work and worship will be gone ;
And wider fields of labor will remove
The greedy competition that now starves,
And makes her slave in body and soul to man.
When woman is made free, and freer man,
And equal both, then love is possible
That has no bitter after-taste of lust.
Then will she be companion unto him,
And fellow in his loftiest hours and aims ;
Not plaything in his hours of idleness,
But helper in the sacred work of the age—
The work that locks its secret in itself—
The self-anointed office of such souls
As ken the secret by uplifted thoughts
And kindred worship, work, and prayer.

'T is not the tyrant but the tyranny
Truth hates and battles with. The circumstance
That makes a soul so brutal it resists.
How damned with dire disease the world
That breeds such nightmare shapes as these!
Looking at them the earth all monstrous seems.
Forever man throws down the gage of war,—
Not unto them which he can well forget,
But to the foulness that begets them such.
The customs of the world its tyrants are.
Some men can only conform or fail.
The world has greater faith in the guarded words
And sifted judgment of the mighty dead
Than in the voice of prophet yet alive;
Or voice of any one who may write fool
Upon the full-bound volume of his life.

The soul has hours when it will shrink from earth,
Feel love a fiction, glory but a gleam ;
All friendship but the gilding of a cheat,
And life a weary wandering, heaven a hope.
There seems no profit in the counted years,
Nor promise in the ages yet unborn.
The truths of earth so little glorious are
They make no rainbow with the tears of time.
Volcanic passions working till they burst
Heap ever ashes on all human hope,
And make earth like a phantom masquerade,
With shifting change grotesque of life and death.
The very soul is swollen and benumbed ;
And all the architecture of its hopes,
That youth had sunned to glory, vanishes
And leaves it stripped in ashes, and this life
Ends in cold questions, and the all of things
Seems voiceless, empty, and unpromising.

The common soul may never know the world
Where wretched genius gropes, though not insane,
In an unbalanced turbulence of mind :
The madness and the mastery of a soul
That's concentrate upon a hope it cannot reach ;
Yet clinging to dead hopes as the old moon
With rim of life clings to her darkened orb.
The soul is bound until its hungry thought
Becomes a slave and forges its own chains.
Through sheer preversity of blinded love
It oft its worst delusions tightest holds.
No patient work and blest endurance calm
By which to build for immortality :
A morbid soul urged by insatiate hopes
That make a cruelty of life—the thirst
Of fevered-wild ambition, such as leaves
This life unfilled and dies itself unquenched ;
With not a hope to steer by launched on life ;
Till vulture passions in voracious greed
On his torn vitals feed, and outwrung cries
Of pain convulse and fade from air again.

LXXXIV.

Death shoots his arrows by the light of love
 Along our heart strings till we hardly dare
 To feel them cling lest he strike quickly there.
 Our life's retreat is strewn with dying hopes ;
 Our years depart as guests from banquets go,
 Worn out with revel, falling into sleep.
 The paths of life and death meet at the grave,
 That wave of earth where often love lies wrecked.
 Life's fated links go by us one by one
 But lift the chain from off us nevermore.
 When all life's aim is told, does it but mean
 To suffer for each other and beguile?
 Man fit to die is fit for nothing else.
 Extinguished hope relit is not again
 That which it was before ; the darkness brief
 Reveals a thousand aspects to the heart
 That color all the new light can disclose.
 Pure sorrow oft is generous and turns
 A deluged heart to sweetest ministry.

They feel the deepest sorrow who conceal.
Deep sorrow ever cannot word itself;
The deepest never shadows e'en the face
With tell-tale aspect that a question draws.
Love ever stands before the cell of grief,
When it is deep enough to be divine,
And keeps it sacred with a voiceless mask.
The voice that seems to come from sorrow's self
Is ever wrung from self-love by its pride,
And is indeed but disappointment's tone.
There is one grief to each soul possible,
That felt, so equals it eclipses it.
Then life may cast its hopes as oft the sea
In anger casts upon the shore its dead.
Yet plummet-hope cast in the depths of grief
Will find eternal calm where silence has
Her shrine, and where the wrecks of joy
Give a strange beauty to the land of death.

LXXXVI.

Fret as we will about our little cares
And gather sweets for flowerless days of life,
The steady earth goes smoothly on its way
And bears us, though unwillingly, to rest.
When all is done we do but balance up
This life's account and find there 's nothing due
The world or us: Death gives receipts in full.
Who has the present never can be robbed.
Among the virtues that do honor man
Is steadfastness that, having fixed its soul
On worthy purposes, looks not aside
Until it works all things to full success.
Things won by straining have the strain within.
True souls can win their aims nor lose the truth:
The world they live in is by such redeemed.

LXXXVII.

A man may revel in the wealth of youth,
And give his heart to hopes of phantom fame;
So drink his days up to the dregs of dreams.
Or love, and see in one fair face the mold
In which all nature has her beauty cast;
Hold fame forever lackey to her smile,
Until she robs him of himself and youth;
Then by life's empty casket so grow man.
And learning lure him; and in skeletons,
And hearts whose throbs have ceased, and forms of plants,
And cast off shells and crystals find no less
That life has limits; each ambition leads
To where no plummet-thought can bottom find:
Soul-travail ere a sweet content is born.
Misfortune often bows us to the dust
To show us all the gold of life else lost.

LXXXVIII.

Man's thoughts are as an angel's, but his deeds
Are often of the level of the worm.
Men strut and stagger with their bended backs
Loaded and smothered with the gilded weights
That pay no portorage except to pride—
The weed that flaunts the gaudiest flower of all
And makes the way-side vulgar with its glare.
And few can wear a pride that will not be
A threadbare vanity at every edge,
And wrinkle life's best laughter with a sneer.
Some faulty souls rob life of all its worth
To make their after-death time over-rich.
Man often walks this earth unstirred, unwon,
Like a swart stranger on the marts of trade,
And gazing idly wonders at the jar
Whose very meaning is to him unknown.
Earth is not paradise to devil-eyes;
From vile imagination's crevices
Crawl insect doubts that will defile its thoughts.

LXXXIX.

Go reverent con the volume of the streets.
No need to know the custom of the place :
It is a well-worn crossing-place of earth.
Who carries in his face a bold intent,
His welcome makes and for the moment rules.
For all the idle men confess their shams
When comes abroad the earnest worker once.
This world with all its folly knows itself.
Here breaks the roar of life's tumultuous waves.
Men catch the floating bubbles of this life
And burst them one by one and call it joy ;
Here ignorance rank of men in morbid mass—
The slime whence cometh every monstrous thought ;
Here life becomes a form and law a doubt ;
Here lives of men flare out in fevered flame ;
Here penances are emblemed ornaments ;
Here beauty shows its ugly skeleton :
The scars of life's fierce fight on every soul
Are seen ; and in each face the battle gleam ;
Here many marry and the fewest mate ;
Here men cook victuals by their altar-fires.

XC.

Look thou abroad upon this human sea
And comprehend the deluge for a truth,
So one with nature that 't is true for time.
Here ignorance with all its groping doubts
And gluttonous greed of monstrous morbid things,
With seething turbulence from the gloomy past,
Forever gathers with disturbing force
On all mankind. Some bravely breast the waves;
Some struggle with the fragments of the wreck;
Some sink at once to silence; and a few
Sit on the hopeless shores in solitude
And see the waifs of all their world of joy
In broken shapes of death adrift around.
How wildly whirling from the stormy past
The world comes dizzy with its plots and wars
And clear oblivion of humanities.
Not strange it yet relapses into guilt
And staggers from the orbit of the true.

XCI.

The solace of elysian thoughts comes not
Unless in the calm solitude of soul ;
And as they truly fabled in old days,
The lonely shepherd's dream was often blessed
By some fair goddess garmented in light.
So shall the yearning soul that seeks the sands
Of living wisdom from the busy path,
Asleep with weariness, have his pale brow
Touched by the fingers of sweet thoughts divine
That make his weakness holy as in dream.
At times the soul runs high and strong, and gains
Upon the shore of its existence far.
Man, tree-like, must draw vigor from the earth
To rise in bloom to heaven. Great souls
Are the strong roots of humankind that pierce
The universe, and with the thoughts they get
They make the lives of their dependent souls
Grow green and beautiful in love's illume.

XCII.

Deeds of to-day, men laugh at with a sneer,
Not fitting with the forms that rule the hour,
Shall speed far-widening down the track of time,
And stir the souls of ages yet to come
With echo of their glory; and will make
All hearts play pilgrim with their gratitude.
The hope that shall unite in brotherhood
Of emulous strife and labor our sons' sons,
And be a step in man's advance to good,
Is now a wish upon the lips of him
Who bids the world go onward in its course,
Unguided through its darkness by his voice.
Man is an infant to the man to be.

'T is they live longest in the future who
Have truest kept the purposes of life.
We know not of to-morrow save in hope,
And in faith's ferry venture Stygian night
To see its other side ; yet hope is vain
That is not built on reason's promises,
And laws of nature by her habits known.
They best the meaning of the future know
Who fullest see the features of to-day.
The wizard hand that writes the deeds undone,
And dares extort from fate what is to be,
Must from the fragmentary records read ;
Unclinch the past, and from its tomb evoke
Wise, reverent forms, and make them prophesy ;
And wrench its inmost secret from to-day.

XCIV.

He who writes pure the epic of the years,
Must send his slender cord among the clouds,
And lure their secret down into to-day;
Must trace the comet-orb of final truth,
Instinct in aim, where shines dim ray of light,
And sound faint vibrates from creation's work;
And from the absolute and fated cast
The orbit of mankind; and so project
Its pathway through the future and record;
The obedient earth shall ever after seem
To travel in the light of what he writes.
Some deeds are figures that shall reckon up
The purpose and the progress of the age.

All the glad stars throw down their jewelled light
In rapture at His feet ; and sees the moon
Within the glowing stream a phantom night ;
The far-off clouds lift, ladder-like, to heaven ;
The suns which sentinel upon the verge
Of everlasting darkness lean to God :
Almost is heard the breath of Him that wakes
From chords of clay the music of the soul ;
New starry thoughts are in the spirit's sky
For every strength of eye, as if it pierced
The curtain that creation hangs about
The senses, and had caught a living glimpse
Of the eternal beauty that pervades all things.

The smallest atom of the universe
Has its own mind and fully knows its place,
And duty in the ordered dance of suns
And systems linked by their intelligence.
The subtlest form of all the energies
That work to final harmony, each glows
With innate zeal to reach the endless goal
Of full perfection of the organism—
The fruitage of the all—which is to man
Far infinitely beyond the cosmos of today,
Or any his imagination sees.
Beyond all human sight there shines a sun
That holds the universe within its leash
By subtler force than gravitation knows,
Each atom instinct with its knowing zeal,
Forever moving towards the final aim.

XCVII.

The mountain top is always solitude.
The higher mounts the soul, the more alone.
To think of heaven by gazing on its blue,
No more of heaven is seen than at its foot.
The vast horizon rises with the eye,
And man but sees afar the more of earth.
The greatest merit looks from lowest earth
And gazing, ne'er his neighbor overlooks,
Keeping companionship with God and Man.
Man's heaven is what's above his soul;
His hell is what is seen beneath his fear.
They part forever as his soul ascends,
Vanish and leave his soul, at last, alone,
Lost in the Universe's solitude,
Unless some human voice shall guide him back
To sympathy with other souls not lost.
Heaven never yet was reached by selfish hands
That lost their loving clasp with other hands.
The men of mind are mountains and they touch
Their fellow mortals only at their feet;
Their summits always lift to solitude.

XCVIII.

Man lives two lives, of body and of mind.
One seeks to live in flesh forever on,
The other forever in free thought to soar,
To range throughout the protean universe,
And know and see the endless change
That motion works in all that can be seen.
God's heat makes motion in all things
From one to complex cosmos full.
Since naught is moveless in the great entire,
Atom, nor earth, nor sun, nor systems all,
Nothing is ever twice the same in space,
Streaming forever no man whither knows—
Nor should—but only that God holds the helm,
And that a soul cannot be lost because
There is no place outside for it to go.

XCIX.

When the full current of the love of truth
Flows thro man's soul, he ever helps
The song that sounds all Nature's harmony,
And hinders not his fellows nor himself.
Love is the lever that will lift the world
From selfishness to all, from hell to heaven.
When man forever finds his outlook high
To clearest understand what God has done,
To scan the past, know present, future read,
And nighest to the heart of nature live,
And learn her wondrous talisman of love,
And comprehend the truth in beauty hid,
And know them part of higher harmony,
Is where the line from atom to the all
Crosses the line from life to liberty—
Prime life to full and final liberty.

THE POET

Long nursed he visions in his inmost heart
And walked the sunny side of Life's strange mart,
And shaped the lurking shadows his eye caught
Till things grew living and transfigured thought.

He saw the secret charms that Nature has ;
Her light, ere it his curious eye could pass,
Was parted and to seven-fold hues was wrought ;
Each life a poem was, and music thought.

He deemed in subtlest depths of souls there play
Sweet airs that softly breathe themselves away ;
That Life has notes of sweetness decked in rhyme
And rightly struck from chords of Truth, and free,
Would sweep far-sounding down the reach of Time,
As long as Time, or Earth, or Man shall be.

The songs of love, hope, truth, unvoiced as yet,
That would be treasured by all hearts that let
Themselves partake of beauty free, the food
To strengthen earnest souls whom Truth has wooed.

Hope swept his heart and made the world with glee
A harp, and stirred its chords of melody.

He strove to cull some buds for Love to see
From sweet and flowery realms of Poesy;
And to the living Soul he loved he brought
A dainty song, the luxury of Thought.

Sent Truth abroad upon Life's busy mart
With wings of song to fly from heart to heart;
Not siren song whose lethal lull was death,
But such as throbbed with glorious thought; whose br
In passing o'er the living soul would wake
Its calmest depths to aspiration; take
A voice and from earth's chaos, life-imbued,
Call living forms, the beautiful and good.

Such song, the undying glow of Love, began
When first God's breath awoke the Soul of Man.

A VISION OF DEATH

As gently as the sunset color quits the mist,
I painless parted and my corse dismissed;
And softly beautiful, as from the rose
Its odor parts, perfuming as it goes,
I floated on the air, amove, unpent;
Though wingless, whereso'er I willed I went.
My eyes were orbless; I was Vision all,
And free forever from my senses' thrall.
I passed through all material things nor knew
I touched them, nor they me, as I went through.
As is the shadow in the air that falls
From that which makes it to the distant walls
Ere it has reached them, so I dwelt a form
And feeling only, living blithe and warm.
I was all feeling, pure and soft and sweet
As low wild music tone, aeolian born,
Breathing itself away for ears too fleet,
Upon the passionate breath of the young Morn.
I had no thought, for it was but the flight
Of steps that led the soul up to the light.
All beauty seen to earth was but a trace
Of the immortal charm pervading space,
And knowledge was not, save alone the Force
That was the simple wondrous universe.

LUTHER DANA WATERMAN

November 21, 1830

June 30, 1918

A great man belongs to all Time, though he is the product of the period in which he lived. This is the justification for preserving dates of birth and death and may also prove that a man of vision sees beyond his day.

Luther Dana Waterman was born in Wheeling, W. Va., and died in Indianapolis, Ind., which was his home for many years. Ancestry of sturdy New England stock contributed to the vigorous mind and body that carried him through school, university, medical college, hardships of the war of '61 in which he served three years as surgeon, and forty years of general medical practice.

He was for several years one of the surgeons of the City Hospital and was one of the charter organizers of the old Indiana Medical College in which he was Professor of Anatomy from 1869 to 1873, and Professor of the Principles and Practice of Medicine from 1875 to 1877. With the consolidation of the several medical schools of the State into the Indiana University School of Medicine, Dr. Waterman became Emeritus Professor of Medicine.

For many years he was an active member of the Indiana State Medical Society and was Secretary and President of that association. It was in May, 1878, as President, that he gave an address entitled,

"Economy and Necessity of a State Board of Health." This was published and distributed resulting eventually in the establishment of a State Board of Health in Indiana. Up to that time but thirteen states in the Union had provided for State Medical Boards and all these had been established within the previous decade.

With all these interests, Dr. Waterman travelled extensively in Europe and in Mexico, where he acquired the Spanish language sufficient for speech and translations of poems.

In 1915 he presented one hundred thousand dollars to the Indiana University for the purpose of founding an Institute for Scientific Research, it being his belief that "the highest form of charity is to discover useful truth"; it was for this purpose he gave the savings of a frugal and industrious life.

A good summary of the worth of the life and character of Dr. Waterman as a noble and useful citizen of the community is contained in the telegraphic greetings sent to him by the students of the Indiana University:

"On the occasion of your eighty-seventh birthday, the faculty and students of Indiana University, by rising vote, unite in sending you greetings. We remember your years of service as physician, as soldier, as citizen. We remember your part in the founding of the school of medicine which now makes part of the University. We remember your service to Science in the establishment of the Waterman Institute

for Research. We remember the originality and courage of your thinking, the strength and facility of your verse. Finally we recognize in you a personality whose wisdom, strength, and magnanimity account for the worthy deeds of your life."

The gift of expression was manifest from Dr. Waterman's youth. As a medical student he won a fifty dollar prize offered by a Cincinnati paper for the best poem contributed to its New Year's edition. This money bought his first set of pocket surgical instruments which served him through forty years' practice.

Dr. Waterman contributed largely to medical literature and in his early career, he owned and edited a newspaper. Articles concerning his travels were shared by home readers through published journals. Essays on scientific and metaphysical subjects evidenced his clear and analytical mind, not usually found in combination with poetical ability of a high degree.

During forty years of general practice, accompanied by hardships only physicians know, "long nursed he visions in his inmost heart." From these visions, based upon observation and experience, evolved a philosophy expressed in stately blank verse which Dr. Waterman published in 1883 under the title of "Phantoms of Life." The poems are completely self-revealing and mark the measure of the man. To those who have studied his lines for many years, "new starry truths are visible." As

a philosophy by which to live, there are no problems of principle untouched from beginning to end of life. Nor did he hesitate to leap the last gap and find it a gentle transition as expressed in his "Vision of Death."

He who would make his life a precious thing
Must nurse a kindly purpose in his soul.

* * * *

They live longest in the future who
Have truest kept the purposes of life.

New York City.

"This is a lovely little volume you have sent me. I have not been able to do more as yet than dip into it here and there, but find what I have read very good indeed. You have the true poet's touch, and bring the thinker abreast of the singer with a fine and sure instinct. It is a noble augury that such books should be born of our still crude western life, and I trust you will be true to your noble gift.

Indeed yours,

Robert Collyer."

Norham Gardens, Oxford.

"Since I last wrote to you I have found many more gems in your *Phantoms of Life*. I do not always trust my own judgment with regard to English poetry. I have found very often that I cannot admire what everybody else praises, and I often value English poetry which great critics tell me is mere rubbish. However, with regard to your poems, I do not stand alone. On the contrary, everyone to whom I show them seems to agree with my estimate of them.

Believe me, yours very truly,

'F. Max Müller.'

From Indianapolis Literary reviews. 1883.

One of the latest publications issued by G. P. Putnam's Sons is a handsome volume of poems by Dr. Luther Dana Waterman. It is made up of ninety-five poems, mainly metaphysical, and all of them meritorious, written in pentameter blank verse. To those who are fortunate enough to own this book its merits will speak for themselves. It is a work that will add to Indiana's growing literary fame. * * * While the Doctor has made himself well known to the public through the columns of the *Journal* in letters from Europe, his new departure is a pleasing and gratify-

ing surprise. That he has succeeded need not be argued. These verses will win warm friends among the cultivated everywhere and will add new laurels to the State's reputation for literary excellence and be a credit to literature.

* * *

Dr. Waterman has studied the invisible as well as the visible life. One is no more real to him than the other. The book is a fine example of condensation and more quotable than any book I know of. It is Emersonian in its suggestiveness, filled with striking thoughts, hopeful truths and charitable expressions. It possesses the merit of sound philosophy and true poesy.

